



# READY FIRST BRIGADE NEWSLETTER

COL Sean MacFarland, Commander  
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April 2006



## Ready First Combat Team Drives On

By: 1LT Bardenwerper



*View of the Tal Afar Granary, as seen from B. Co. 2/37's new Headquarters.*

The Soldiers of the Ready First Combat Team have worked extremely hard since leaving Germany in January, but April may have been the busiest month of the deployment. Operations in and around Tal Afar accelerated as the Brigade fought hard to maintain the initiative they established after taking over for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Armored Cavalry Regiment.

As April progressed it became apparent that the enemy was not going to cede Tal Afar without a fight. However, due to the hard work and professionalism of 1<sup>st</sup> BCT soldiers, every time the enemy sought to regain a foothold in the city their efforts were thwarted by aggressive coalition operations. The Ready First Combat Team successfully captured a number of the city's worst terrorists as a result of their relentless offensive operations and their successful partnership with the Iraqi Security Forces that matures and improves with each passing day.

As May approaches, it appears as if it will bring with it a new set of challenges for the Ready First Combat Team. However, confidence is high and there is no doubt that the brigade will rise to the occasion. After a year of intense preparation for the deployment and over three months in Iraq the brigade has continued to evolve into both a lethal fighting force capable of crushing its enemies as well as a humanitarian instrument helping innocent Iraqis to enjoy better lives. The Soldiers of the Ready First Combat Team continue to execute both missions flawlessly. In doing so, they are adding another proud chapter to the both the brigade's and the nation's history.



*US and Iraqi Soldiers conduct a cordon and search in Tal Afar during "Operation Duke Strike."*



*Dramatic view of sandstorm taken from the Ready First Combat Team TOC on FOB Sykes.*



*SPC Kirk from 1<sup>st</sup> BDE HHC takes a mighty swing at his opponent during "Friday Night Fights" at FOB Sykes.*



# READY FIRST BRIGADE NEWSLETTER

1-36INF

“SPARTANS”



## The Spartans of Anbar Province

By: CPT John Minichello



*A Spartan stands next to a cache of mortars discovered in Hit, Anbar Province*

The dismantling of the extended terrorist network in the city of Hit and its surrounding villages continues as the Spartans enter their third month of combat operations in the Al Anbar province. In the two months since their arrival in Sector, the Spartans have managed to send more than sixty insurgents to Abu Ghraib. Key leaders of the local and regional insurgency have been taken out of play thanks to the efforts of Spartan Soldiers. Aggressive patrolling and intensive intelligence gathering efforts have yielded tips leading to large cache finds as well as increased rapport with the local citizenry. The word from detainees is that the populace is happy with the increased activity and feel that there is a greater coalition presence in the area.

The Spartans have simultaneously stepped up their efforts in training and incorporating Iraqi Army units into operations. The IA sister battalion is rapidly picking up the skills it will need to become an independent operational unit. They have also helped offset the grueling operations schedule by freeing up Spartan Soldiers for much needed maintenance.

Spartan Soldiers will continue to bring the fight to the enemy as the long Iraqi summer approaches, showing the insurgents just what it will cost them to continue operations anywhere near Hit.





# READY FIRST BRIGADE NEWSLETTER

1-37AR  
**“BANDITS”**



## Dear Bandit Family,

The last month has been an exciting one for Task Force Bandits. We continue to make progress in transitioning our battle space over to the Iraqi Security Forces that will be responsible for keeping the peace when we depart. The 3rd Battalion, 3rd Brigade Iraqi Army Validation Exercise, conducted on April 5 under the supervision of Team Bulldog, was an important step in this process. During this exercise, the 3rd Battalion planned and executed a cordon and search operation at a local cement factory with minimal US Army assistance. Over the course of the next few months, the other Iraqi Army battalions with which we are partnered will conduct similar validation exercises to prove their ability to operate independently of US forces.

Despite relatively low insurgent activity in our area of operations, the threat is still very real here. Your Bandits have proven to be very effective at identifying IEDs before they explode and this has to be very frustrating for our enemies. Fantom Troop's vigilant patrolling of the vast countryside around Bi'aj, Bulldog's operations in and around Sinjar, as well as the operations Cobra Team and Assassin Battery are conducting at and around the point of entry in Rabiya, are disrupting the enemy's plans and their efforts to undermine security in the area. Overall, the soldiers of Task Force Bandits are doing an outstanding job working in partnership with Iraqi Security Forces and deterring insurgent activity, not just in Western Ninewah, but throughout Iraq.



*Bandits and their IA Brothers*



*Bandit 6 goes native!*



*Operation Bandit Buddies helps!*



# READY FIRST BRIGADE NEWSLETTER

1-37AR  
*“BANDITS”*



On a lighter note, quality of life on the bases continues to improve. We now have a unit-run PX in Sinjar and we're working on a rolling PX (on a truck) that we can take to Rabayah, Bi'aj and the Mountain. In Sinjar, Outlaw Company successfully moved the dining facility from a flooded, crowded, dilapidated building to a spacious, circus-type tent that provides our soldiers with a better atmosphere in which to take their meals. We've also bought some new wooden tables and benches to improve seating in the Bi'aj and Sinjar mess halls. The new MWR/Soldiers' Center is going up as in Sinjar as I write these words, expect a full report in the next edition of *Bandit News From the Front*. The Sinjar gym also received a facelift recently thanks to 2LT Mulligan, one of our new officers, who, shortly after his arrival to the Task Force, organized a detail that cleaned the facility and repaired some of its equipment. The gym has also been the setting for the Bandit leg of the Brigade Boxing Smoker. This competition started with seventeen boxers divided into four different weight classes competing for the chance to go to FOB Sykes for the Brigade finals. After three days of exciting bouts, the field has narrowed to seven boxers. Additional bouts this week will determine the four finalists.

Thank you for your continued support of Task Force Bandits. I especially appreciate all the Operation Bandit Buddies boxes that are coming in. Please keep them coming. Those toys, clothes, etc., are very much appreciated by the locals and they are a great tool for building relationships with Iraqi villages. The books, DVDs, etc. will all be put in the library at the Soldiers' Center and I'll make sure that the Bandits in Bi'aj, Rabayah, and on the Mountain get their fair share. We all look forward to your letters, packages, and emails. Please keep them coming! Thank you for the privilege of leading your Bandit in combat. Abrams' Standards!



*CPL Hendrickson with Iraqi children.*



*SPC Russell uses coded messages at the Sinjar Cement Factory.*

**LTC Tedesco**  
**Bandit 6**





# READY FIRST BRIGADE NEWSLETTER

2-37AR  
**“IRON DUKES”**



## **A Day In The Life Of The Average Duke**

The soldiers of TF 2-37 have been very busy the last month patrolling in vehicles, patrolling on foot, conducting raids and training Iraqi Security Forces. But even after the long hours of patrolling, when the soldiers come back tired from their patrol, the Iron Duke soldiers move quickly to prepare their vehicles for the next mission.

On the way up to their platoon rooms, the soldiers are thrilled to see that today was ‘a mail day.’ They quickly find out who got mail and more importantly for the group, who got packages. When soldiers get a package from home, his friends multiply, appearing out of nowhere just ‘to see what you got.’ Most of the time, the friends don’t walk away empty handed from the recipients of the care packages.

Granola bars are traded for potato chips, new video games immediately tested, and the latest edition of the most popular magazines are quickly thumbled through to see what’s new. Once their vehicles are prepared, the soldiers move into their areas of their Combat Out-Post (COP) to prepare for their next mission—improve the living quarters. The soldiers’ living quarters are covered with pictures of home—their wives, children, girlfriends, pets, cars, and anything else that a soldier holds in high regard.

The soldiers are getting ready to drift off to sleep before the next mission when someone has the idea on how to improve the room—a bookshelf here, a floorboard here, an extra bucket to catch the rainwater. The sounds of hammering, sawing, and moving equipment continue well into the night as the soldiers work together to build the latest comfort item—hooks to hold body armor, shelves for toiletries, new bunk beds, an end table or whatever the mission of the night may be. The soldiers stand back to take a look at the fruits of their labor.

Exhausted, but proud of their latest accomplishment, the tired warriors call it a night in order to prepare for the next day’s mission.



*Soldiers of Team Hard Rock, C CO, 1-36 keep local security during a patrol in their Tal Afar neighborhood*



*SPC Cencich of TM Aggressors keeps watch from his guard post at COP Alcatraz in Tal Afar*



*Soldiers from Team Battle, B CO, 2-37 keep the streets of Tal Afar safe during their daily patrols during throughout their sector.*



# READY FIRST BRIGADE NEWSLETTER

## 2-3 FA REGT "GUNNERS"



### Bloodhounds Welcome CPT Kap

FOB SYKES, Iraq—

By 1LT Josh McKenna



Just about three months have now passed since the Gunners departed Germany and embarked on a mission to maintain the peace in Iraq and transition authority to the locals. Just as it was hard to say goodbye to family, CPT Keith Donnell recently said goodbye to his Bloodhound family—a close-knit band of brothers.

On 1 April, 2006 CPT Keith Donnell changed command of Bravo Batter, 2-3 FA. CPT Steve Kaplachinski is now in charge of the hard-working Bloodhounds, in continuation of the mission and without missing a step. Above, the Battery symbol of command—the guidon is passed from the outgoing commander to the incoming. The Bloodhounds have various missions of crucial importance, to include securing logistics convoys for 501<sup>st</sup> FSB.

The rest of the Battalion is staying strong. The Joint Coordination Centers (JCCs) keep collecting valuable information and are helping the cities they neighbor. Al Kasik remains strong in their Iraqi Army and Police academies. And the mighty Paladins of TF 2-3 are lighting up the sky with illumination. Gunners are even re-enlisting at record rates and staying Army. The tally for bonuses is over \$2 million!



### Shaken—But Not Stirred

AL KASIK, Iraq—

By CPT Gavin Wells

The Iraqi Army recruitment center in Al Kasik, shaken by a suicide bomber, is undeterred, and the recruits keep rolling in. More and more Iraqis are showing up to be trained and join the fight against terrorism. The soldiers of Service Battery are doing great. Service Battery is executing numerous missions here in Iraq, which are both challenging and rewarding. Our soldiers are serving in various locations from FOBs Sinjar and Rabiah, to Kasik and Sykes. In Sinjar, Rabiah and FOB Sykes, we are doing what we do best—providing logistical support.

In Kasik, the mission is unique—we are instructing numerous courses ranging from basic Police Operations to Iraqi Army Leadership. We aren't kicking in doors, capturing terrorist, or any of that fancy stuff. Our soldiers are teaching ethics, and the importance of law and order. Service Battery is providing a moral base for the Iraqis to build on. The soldiers of Service Battery have embraced the mission, and take great pride in executing it.

The battery has recently begun to take R & R leave. All are looking forward to the new babies, the ski trips, and most importantly, the break from Iraq. Morale is high in Service Battery; I attribute the high morale to the support of the FRG, and the individual soldiers in SVC Battery. Without the family members supporting each other in Giessen, we could not focus on the mission here in Iraq. Moreover, without the Battery's individual personalities, we would not be able to make every mission an enjoyable mission. Please continue to support each other, and I personally thank you for the support to the battery.







# READY FIRST BRIGADE NEWSLETTER

## 16<sup>TH</sup> ENGINEER "CATAMOUNTS"



### On The Road In Tal Afar

On a rainy April day in Tal Afar, 16<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion Soldiers are running flat out. Their high operational tempo enables them to move through ankle deep mud sending a message to the AIF there is no backing off on days like this. With their armored vehicles and the latest high tech military gadgetry, TF Catamounts is a mainstay of the region's security, pumping enough presence into Tal Afar City to keep the AIF at bay.

Shared between the Catamounts and the peace loving residents of Tal Afar is a sprawling saga of survival and freedom of movement. Here and there on the main streets of Tal Afar, Catamounts tirelessly perform the task of exploring suspected IEDs. As the top leadership would agree what sets the Catamounts apart from other units is our strong work ethic combined with grace of living semi comfortable in a hostile environment.

As early as 0700 in front of the battalion TOC there are signs of yet another convoy preparing to depart the safety of the FOB. Catamounts listened closely as their battalion commander, LTC Allan L. Webster, explained how to use situational awareness and passed techniques from one Task Force to the next. The driving force behind the Catamounts is the satisfaction of knowing we are making improvements to the lives of the Iraqis.



*Soldiers receive a briefing before going on patrol*



*A HMMWV convoy moves toward Tal Afar*



# READY FIRST BRIGADE NEWSLETTER

**16<sup>TH</sup> ENGINEER**  
**"CATAMOUNTS"**



## **Tiny School Gets A Helping Hand**

Following numerous visits from the 16th EN CMO section (consisting of CPT Caswell, SFC Cvikich, and SPC (P) Fewtrell) to the Castle in Tal Afar, SPC Fewtrell noticed a small school that was struggling to provide a healthy learning environment to local children. He asked the headmaster if there was anything that he could do to enhance their learning environment. The headmaster mentioned that he needed supplies and could use some benches for the students. SPC (P) Fewtrell spearheaded the mission of gathering supplies through the Horizontal and Vertical Platoon 505th EN CMBT HVY attached to 16th EN and the READY S9. The delivery was made to the school on the 11<sup>th</sup> of April, 2006 and consisted of 2 school benches and various types of school supplies (books, pens, pencils, paper, etc.). The school, comprised of approximately six to ten students, was thankful for the new supplies and the event even raised the interest of Mayor Najem, mayor of Tal Afar. In true Catamount spirit, SPC (P) Fewtrell continues to search for anything that could help contribute to this small school's success.



*Mayor Najem takes time from his busy schedule to visit the school*



*Children from the Castle's school hold up their newest supplies*





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## 501<sup>st</sup> FSB **“PROVIDERS”**



The Providers continue to support an intense battle rhythm in AO Ready. All facets of our combat service support and combat health support missions are fully engaged. Alpha Company “Gators” run frequent re-supply missions to units in outlying areas in order to keep our fighters well stocked with equipment, food, repair parts and other resources to ensure mission accomplishment. Up to this point, there have been over 50 of these Combat Logistics Patrols, spanning almost 2,500 miles. The CLPs receive support from a dedicated and knowledgeable team of supply warehouse, fuel, water and ammunition personnel.

The RFCT also continues to benefit from the 501st FSB’s expertise in direct support maintenance. All of the Bravo Company shops have seen plenty of business from the supported units and are doing outstanding work in turning around key systems, preventing lapses in combat readiness. At this point, the Blacksmiths have completed almost 600 jobs for the RFCT.

Charlie Company, already providing some of the best unit-level support in theatre, continues to refine and improve its operations. Comprehensive training has enabled our medics to deepen their skill set, giving them a greater range of patient care. Routine aches and pains have been reduced as well. Over 1183 patients have been seen in the Provider Aid Station by Cobra medics.

The Providers have also developed excellent force protection and intelligence gathering protocols, contributing to the situational awareness of the Brigade’s mission. Our Brigade Detention and Internment Facility continues to process members of the insurgency brought in by our line units. The 666 prisoners seen in the BDIF is a testament to their efficiency and contribution to the safety of our Soldiers and the citizens of Tal Afar.



The Provider family continues to embrace our adopted members, from Service Battery and the Bloodhounds of Bravo Battery, 2/3 Field Artillery. After an exciting Change of Command ceremony, the Bloodhounds continued their fast-paced mission running the Convoy Security Detail. The gunners have made the transition to a mechanized rifle team with ease. They also have been training in exciting Air Assault missions, exercising more possibilities for greater mission readiness.



All the Soldiers continue to increase their combat abilities through frequent training and verification of skills. However, there is time for fun in the battalion. With the rain moving on and giving way to sunny weather, the Soldiers are taking advantage of time to unwind. Events like unit Bar-B-Qs and the Brigade-sponsored Boxing Smoker give Soldiers the chance to balance out work with fun. More importantly, our Environmental Leave program is in full swing.

Our combination of hard work, dedicated and strong camaraderie enables us to provide uninterrupted CSS to the Ready First Combat Team, no matter what the mission dictates! Providers!



# READY FIRST BRIGADE NEWSLETTER

## A/141 SIGNAL "GATORS"



### Greetings To The Gator Family

By CPT Cason Green/ISG Calvin Mister

The Gators continue their outstanding work in support of the Ready First Combat Team here in Tall Afar, Iraq. There have been many things going on, and everyone has been working hard to keep the communications up. The mission is going well as the Gators have the most stable and reliable network in northern Iraq. The headquarters Soldiers are also working hard by keeping our vehicles and generators running while manning the company command post and the supply room. Additionally, many Soldiers have been involved with training the Iraqi Signal Company up in Al Kisik. This has given some of our NCOs and Soldiers a chance both to grow as leaders and to improve the defense of Iraq. The Gators recently ran an AK-47 range with the Iraqis. This was quite an exciting event, and I have included a few pictures below. The brigade has also been hosting a boxing smoker, and CPT Paul has written an attached article on the Gator involvement.

R&R leave is under way for April with 4 Soldiers currently on leave and 3 more set to head back on the 17<sup>th</sup> and 3 on the 21. Names and dates are already locked in for May. Congratulations to the following Gator Soldiers on being promoted to Specialist- SPC Del Rio, SPC Robinson, SPC DeJesus, and SPC Campbell. Gator Soldiers continue to reconfirm their commitment to the Army- and pick up tax-free bonuses for it! SGT Franklin, SGT Curtis (extended for the BEAR program), SPC Carson, and SPC Flores have all re-enlisted this month. Congratulations go to these Soldiers for keeping the Gators going strong. Congratulations to PFC Reagan and his wife Deonna on the birth of their healthy baby boy, Kevin! The newest little Gator was born on April 16 and was 20" long and just over 7 pounds.

Thank you to all of the spouses that continue to support the troops and support each other back on the homefront. If you are not currently an active member of the FRG, I encourage you to participate. The FRG meetings are information and fun, and a great place to socialize with other spouses that are also coping with the difficulties of deployment. We appreciate everything that you do!



*1LT Gariepy and the Iraqi Sergeant Major coach an Iraqi private firing his AK-47.*



*Congratulations to SGT Franklin on his re-enlistment for 5 years!*



*ISG Mister and CPT Green take time to pose with the Iraqi Signal Company leadership.*





# READY FIRST BRIGADE NEWSLETTER

## A/141 SIGNAL "GATORS"



### Gators Dominate The Ring

By CPT Scott Paul

Friday night, April 7, 2006, five athletes from A/141SIG Gators took to the ring in the second FOB Sykes Boxing Smoker. The night consisted of 8 bouts with fighters from all units of the 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division. A/141 proudly owned 5 of the 8 bouts as SPC Oricio, SPC Stufflebean, SGT Franklin, SSG Berisha, and SPC Abdullah challenged other skilled competitors in 3 rounds of boxing madness.

In the 150lb weight class, SPC Oricio traded shots with one of 1BDE's most seasoned veteran. This veteran's quick hands and intimidating looks was heavily challenged by SPC Oricio's strong defense, footwork, and critical jabs. For three rounds both competitors displayed amazing skill and earned the respect of the crowd as everyone cheered both fighters. In the end, SPC Britton's scorecard put him ahead, but it was the beginning of a promising future and a great display of courage for SPC Oricio.

The next fight starred SGT Franklin in a first round battle. Each boxer remained quick on their feet. Gloves flew as each warrior landed punches. But the fight took an unexpected turn within seconds as an unseen right-hand glove shot straight up from SGT Franklin's body and connected clean into his opponent's jaw. The blast silenced the air and silenced his competitor as he toppled to the floor. His competitor did recover and walked away from the fight. It was an awesome victory for the Gators by way of KO.

SPC Stufflebean began his bout from the yellow corner. With the bell ring of round 1, Stufflebean wasted no time by landing swift punches to his opponent and moving to the rhythm of the 'Stuffle Shuffle'. It was clear Stufflebean had gained control of the fight early into the first round. After 1 minute the referee called the fight as his opponent's shoulder was knocked out of position and unable to continue. It was a short but sweet victory for SPC Stufflebean.

A/141SIG continued to represent with SSG Berisha entering the 180lbs weight class. Some call him the jaw of steel, and believe he has never been knocked down. For three rounds they slugged it out with high emotions and mighty punches. Soon his competitor learned that even the hardest punch he had was not enough to hurt SSG Berisha. SSG Berisha's stamina and resilient jaw allowed him to land several punches on his opponent. Although the scorecards laid victory to his competitor, SSG Berisha held his own ground well in his first boxing match.

The final bout of the night starred a familiar face, SPC Abdullah. With some impressive victories leading into this fight, he owned the audience's attention. Throughout the first round, each competitor traded combinations of punches making it clear they meant business. Abdullah's opponent used a tough defense and a variety of punches as Abdullah neutralized him with his speed and agility. Each fighter traded jabs, right-hands, and body shots and the advantage swung to each fighter several times. In a split decision, 2-1, Abdullah's conditioning and explosive combinations lent him an impressive victory over his fighter.

It was a fantastic ending to a great night of boxing. On April 7 the Alpha Gators earned their place amongst the combat arms battalions in a display of true courage, perseverance, and athletic skill. With over two-hundred people in attendance, A/141 Signal owned the ring and owned the night. Good luck to all the future fighters as next week is sure to be another exciting test of personal fortitude. Sword and Voice!



SPC Stufflebean gets ready for his fight.



SPC Abdullah studies his opponent before winning in a 2-1 decision!



# READY FIRST BRIGADE NEWSLETTER

BDE Chaplain

Chaplain Mike Wood



## **"Getting Ahead of God"**

by Chaplain Mike Wood

In Exodus chapter 2 verses 11-15 we read,

"Now it came about in those days, when Moses had grown up, that he went out to his brethren and looked on their hard labors; and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren. So he looked this way and that, and when he saw there was no one around, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. And he went out the next day, and behold, two Hebrews were fighting with each other; and he said to the offender, "Why are you striking your companion?" But he said, "Who made you a prince or a judge over us? Are you intending to kill me, as you killed the Egyptian?" Then Moses was afraid, and said, "Surely the matter has become known." When Pharaoh heard of this matter, he tried to kill Moses. But Moses fled from the presence of Pharaoh and settled in the land of Midian." (The New American Standard Bible, (La Habra, California: The Lockman Foundation) 1977.)

This is a classic example of trying to do the right thing but getting ahead of God. Moses seems to be operating strictly from his flesh in this episode. He didn't stop to pray. He didn't wait on God's call. He didn't consult any counselors. He didn't even weigh courses of action. He saw and he acted spontaneously and passionately. He found himself out of step with God.

He went "riding in on his white horse" to save the day, only to find out that the Israelites were not quite ready for his "leadership." It's awfully difficult to save someone who doesn't want saving.

After this disastrous start, Moses spent forty years in Midian being humbled and shaped into an instrument that God could use. When God did call him to action, he was so thoroughly humbled that he asked God to find someone else for the job. God had to restore his faith before He could use him.

We often operate in the flesh and not in the Spirit. We make our own plans and do our own pleasure without even consulting the God who knows us better than we know ourselves. Paul writes, "Walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh." To walk in the Spirit is to keep the lines of communication with God open, to pray and read His Word daily, to consult wise counsel before making big decisions, and to listen to the "still, small voice" of the Spirit as we live our lives. Even if you're doing the right thing, you should listen and learn of God's timing and methods. If you don't you may end up paying consequences for years to come. Don't get ahead of God.





# READY FIRST BRIGADE NEWSLETTER

## Know Your Enemy: The Sand Fly and Leishmaniasis

By CPT Luria, Dep BDE SURG



**Enemy Situation-** The sand Fly (aka *Phlebotomus*) is indigenous to Iraq particularly northern Iraq, vicinity Mosul and Tall'afar. The sand fly is a 2-3mm winged, blood sucking insect that may carry the parasite *Leishmania major*.

**Enemy Weapons:** *Leishmania major* is the cause of Leishmaniasis. (aka. Kala-Azar, The Baghdad Boil) Infection with the Leishmaniasis parasite causes a skin ulcer (Crater-like skin sore) that can take 6-9 months to heal and can leave a permanent scar. The ulcer can grow to be 4-6 inches wide without treatment. Some rare varieties of Leishmaniasis, not common to this AO, can cause severe tissue destruction or systemic disease.

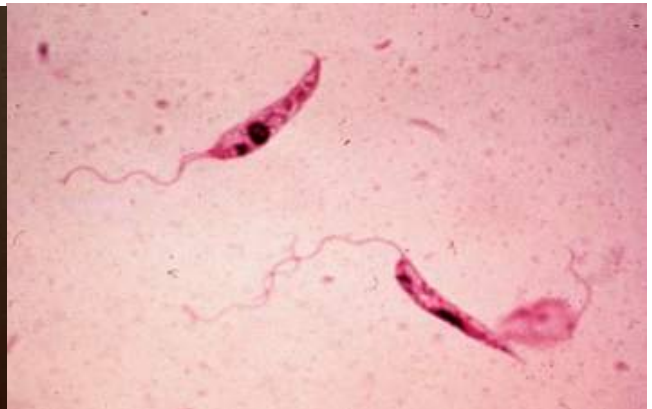


**Known Enemy TTPs:** The sand fly feeds on human and animal blood mainly from dusk till dawn. The sand fly is active from mid April to October. He is a poor flyer and usually strikes close to the ground. It is likely that he often attacks soldiers who are moving between their rooms and the bathroom in shorts and sandals or are outside with their legs unprotected after dark. The sand fly will also strike during the daytime if disturbed from his hiding places. (Dark, humid, protected areas such as rodent burrows, rock crevices, corners of open buildings, and between sand bags.)

**Defensive Measures:** Proper wear of ACU/DCU treated with Permethrin and DEET insect repellent applied to exposed skin decrease your chance of being attacked by the sand fly.

**Actions on Contact-** The sand fly is so small you will likely not even know you have been bitten and infected. It is only after weeks to months that a non-healing ulcer will appear. If you identify a new wound that is not improving report to the aid station as soon as possible. Early treatment can reduce permanent scarring.

Only you can protect yourself from the Sand Fly and Leishmaniasis, if you have any questions ask your Medics or Field Sanitation Team members.





# READY FIRST BRIGADE NEWSLETTER

## THIS MONTH IN AMERICAN MILITARY HISTORY

By: 1Lt Tom Campbell



The Ready First Combat Team continues to work with Coalition Forces, including the Iraqi Army and Police, to defeat the insurgency in northern Iraq. As operations carry on, we see acts of bravery and compassion on every front. From fire fights with AIF, to helping Iraqis rebuild their country, soldiers of the RFCT continue to make their mark in history. One day books will reflect the great things done by our BCT. They will tell stories of the heroism and selflessness we see everyday. One day our children will write papers about our actions in their history class. One day professors at West Point and ROTC programs will teach warfare strategies that we today are developing. The Ready First Combat Team is making a larger impact than we could ever imagine.

Below you will find references to those before us who made their impact in history during the month of April:

### **April 7, 1776 – The American Revolution**

On this day in 1776, Navy Captain John Barry, commander of the American warship Lexington, makes the first American naval capture of a British vessel when he takes command of the British warship HMS Edward off the coast of Virginia. The capture of the Edward and its cargo turned Captain Barry into a national hero and boosted the morale of the Continental forces.

### **April 12, 1861 – The Civil War**

The American Civil War begins when Confederates fire on Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor.

The fort had been the source of tension between the Union and Confederacy for several months. After South Carolina seceded, the state demanded the fort be turned over but Union officials refused. A supply ship, the "Star of the West," tried to reach Fort Sumter on January 9, but the shore batteries opened fire and drove it away. For both sides, Sumter was a symbol of sovereignty. The Union could not allow it to fall to the Confederates, although throughout the Deep South other federal installations had been seized. For South Carolinians, secession meant little if the Yankees still held the stronghold. The issue hung in the air when Abraham Lincoln took the oath of office on March 4, stating in his inauguration address: "You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors."

Lincoln did not try to send reinforcements but he did send in food. This way, Lincoln could characterize the operation as a humanitarian mission, bringing, in his words, "food for hungry men." He sent word to the Confederates in Charleston of his intentions on April 6. The Confederate Congress at Montgomery, Alabama, had decided on February 15 that Sumter and other forts must be acquired "either by negotiation or force." Negotiation, it seemed, had failed. The Confederates demanded surrender of the fort, but Major Robert Anderson, commander of Fort Sumter, refused.

At 4:30 a.m. on April 12, the Confederate guns opened fire. For thirty-three hours, the shore batteries lobbed 4,000 shells in the direction of the fort. Finally, the garrison inside the battered fort raised the white flag. No one on either side had been killed, although two Union soldiers died when the departing soldiers fired a gun salute, and some cartridges exploded prematurely. It was a nearly bloodless beginning to America's bloodiest war.

### **April 9, 1865 – The Civil War**

Confederate General Robert E. Lee surrenders his army to Union General Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Court House, Virginia.

For more than a week, Lee had tried to outrun Grant to the west of Richmond and Petersburg. After a ten-month siege of the two cities, the Union forces broke through the defenses and forced Lee to retreat. The Confederates moved along the Appomattox River, with Union General Phillip Sheridan shadowing them to the south. Lee's army had little food, and they began to desert in large numbers on the retreat. When Lee arrived at Appomattox, he found that his path was blocked. He had no choice but to request a meeting with Grant.

They met at a house in Appomattox at 2:00 p.m. on the afternoon of April 9. Lee was resplendent in his dress uniform and a fine sword at his side. Grant arrived wearing a simple soldier's coat that was muddy from his long ride. The great generals spoke of their service in the Mexican War, and then set about the business at hand. Grant offered generous terms. Officers could keep their side arms, and all men would be immediately released to return home. Any officers and enlisted men who owned horses could take them home, Grant said, to help put crops in the field and carry their families through the next winter. These terms, said Lee, would have "the best possible effect upon the men," and "will do much toward conciliating our people." The papers were signed and Lee prepared to return to his men.





# READY FIRST BRIGADE NEWSLETTER



## **April 6, 1917 – World War I**

On April 6, 1917, two days after the U.S. Senate votes 82 to 6 to declare war against Germany, the U.S. House of Representatives endorses the decision by a vote of 373 to 50, and the United States formally enters the First World War. When World War I erupted in 1914, President Woodrow Wilson pledged neutrality for the United States, a position favored by the vast majority of Americans. Britain, however, was one of America's closest trading partners, and tension soon arose between the United States and Germany over the latter's attempted quarantine of the British Isles. Several U.S. ships traveling to Britain were damaged or sunk by German mines, and, in February 1915, Germany announced unrestricted warfare against all ships, neutral or otherwise, that entered the war zone around Britain. One month later, Germany announced that a German cruiser had sunk the William P. Frye, a private American vessel. President Wilson was outraged, but the German government apologized, calling the attack an unfortunate mistake.

## **April 1, 1945 – World War II**

April 1, 1945, after suffering the loss of 116 planes and damage to three aircraft carriers, 50,000 U.S. combat troops of the 10th Army, under the command of Lieutenant General Simon B. Buckner Jr., land on the southwest coast of the Japanese island of Okinawa, 350 miles south of Kyushu, the southern main island of Japan. Determined to seize Okinawa as a base of operations for the army ground and air forces for a later assault on mainland Japan, more than 1,300 ships converged on the island, finally putting ashore 50,000 combat troops on April 1. The Americans quickly seized two airfields and advanced inland to cut the island's waist. They battled nearly 120,000 Japanese army, militia, and labor troops under the command of Lieutenant General Mitsuru Ushijima. The Japanese surprised the American forces with a change in strategy, drawing them into the mainland rather than confronting them at the water's edge. While Americans landed without loss of men, they would suffer more than 50,000 casualties, including more than 12,000 deaths, as the Japanese staged a desperate defense of the island, a defense that included waves of kamikaze ("divine wind") air attacks. Eventually, these suicide raids proved counterproductive, as the Japanese finally ran out of planes and resolve, with some 4,000 finally surrendering. Japanese casualties numbered some 117,000.

## **April 12, 1945 – The American President**

On this day in 1945, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt passes away after four momentous terms in office, leaving Vice President Harry S. Truman in charge of a country still fighting the Second World War and in possession of a weapon of unprecedented and terrifying power. In her sitting room Roosevelt's aides told her of the president's death. At 5:30 pm, she greeted Vice President Harry Truman, who had not yet been told the news. A calm and quiet Eleanor said, "Harry, the president is dead." He asked if there was anything he could do for her, to which she replied, "Is there anything we can do for you? For you are the one in trouble now."

## **April 6, 1965 - Vietnam**

National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy drafts and signs National Security Action Memorandum 328 on behalf of President Lyndon B. Johnson. This document came out of National Security Council meetings that were held on April 1 and April 2. The memorandum authorized U.S. personnel to take the offensive in South Vietnam to secure "enclaves" and to support South Vietnamese operations. The so-called "enclave strategy" called for the U.S. forces to control the densely-populated coastal areas while the South Vietnamese forces moved inland to fight the communists. This memorandum represented a major mission change for the American soldiers and Marines who had recently arrived in Vietnam. American forces had been limited to strictly defensive operations around the U.S. air bases, but the memorandum authorized them to go on the offensive to secure large areas of terrain, an escalation of U.S. involvement in the war.

## **April 6, 1991 – The Persian Gulf**

Iraq accepts a permanent cease-fire on April 6, agreeing to pay reparations to Kuwait, reveal the location and extent of its stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons, and eliminate its weapons of mass destruction.

## **April 2003 – Operation Iraqi Freedom**

In early April 2003, American tanks and armored vehicles overcame the last concerted Iraqi resistance and rolled into the capital; by April 9 the Hussein government had vanished. Subsequently, Kurdish fighters and American forces entered the key northern cities of Kirkuk and Mosul, and Hussein's stronghold of Tikrit also capitulated to the U.S. On April 15 President Bush declared that the Hussein regime was "no more."



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## THE MONTH IN PICTURES

